



Natural Resources Conservation Service
South Carolina's
Current Developments
Helping People Help the Land

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

October/November 2007

From the Office of the
State Conservationist

Dear NRCsers,



As we begin the new fiscal year under a continuing resolution, I encourage you to focus your efforts on those programs for which we have at least partial apportionment—CRP and WRP, as well as EQIP.

As Frank Wilcox advised, if you have hours allocated to you in either of these programs, you may work/charge time to them as appropriate.

Keep in mind, however, that our priority is still getting all our EQIP (76T) applications *ranked and rated* and turned into contracts by **December 31st**.

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In addition, SC NRCS has initiated the revised organizational structure focusing on watershed teams, which will reduce the administrative workload of our field personnel. The watershed based staffing plan will allow us to manage ever-changing workloads by effectively responding to shifting agency priorities. It will also help reduce operating costs, reduce overhead and streamline field support.

The plan will promote consistency, improved quality control and streamlined communications, as well as more cross-trained employees who will enjoy the opportunity to work across county lines and experience a more diverse resource planning approach. We have filled four of the nine watershed teams with Supervisory District Conservationists (Ann Christie in the Catawba Watershed, Louis Jackson in the Wateree Watershed, Diane Leone in the Salkehatchie Watershed, and Hugh Smith in the Saluda Watershed). Hopefully when our budget situation improves, and the hiring freeze is lifted, we will begin to fill the remaining Supervisory DC positions. A map of the watershed areas can be viewed on page 14 of this newsletter*.

Plans are well underway for the 2008 SC Conservation Partnership Conference, which will focus on water quality and quantity issues. You can read more about the January 2008 meeting in Myrtle Beach inside this edition of *Current Developments*.

In closing, thanks to your outstanding efforts and dedication, South Carolina was once again a shining example of the benefits of a strong Conservation Partnership. I would like to thank all our employees, as well as our partners, for helping us to not only meet, but ultimately exceed all our FY '07 conservation goals.



SC NRCS and Audubon Society Celebrate Permanent WRP Easement

NRCS Chief Lancaster releases rehabilitated Osprey into the easement area

Amy O. Maxwell, SC NRCS Public Affairs Specialist

NRCS Chief Arlen Lancaster and National Audubon Society Chief Operating Officer Robert Perciasepe visited South Carolina for a Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) ceremony in Dorchester County on October 11, 2007.

The event took place at the Francis Beidler Forest, the world's largest virgin cypress-tupelo swamp forest. The WRP easement will restore and permanently protect over 6,000 acres in the forest. The WRP plan calls for restoring natural hydrology to original pre-development conditions, before roads and forestry practices altered it. Located in Four Holes Swamp, the Forest is approximately 15,500 acres with more than 1,800 acres of ancient trees, some dating back 1,000 years.

SC NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas explained, "There are large high-fill roads associated with past forestry practices which altered the hydrology of this part of the swamp, more specifically, the Four Holes Swamp. The WRP restoration plan includes breaking the blockages to restore natural flow." Norman L. Brunswig, Executive Director of Audubon South Carolina, remarked, "The WRP is enabling NRCS and Audubon to repair the only significant hydrologic defects in the main body of the Francis Beidler Forest. It is a great day for conservation in South Carolina."

Chief Lancaster concluded the ceremony by releasing a rehabilitated Osprey back into the easement area.



International Center for Birds of Prey Educational Director Stephen I. Schabel, Jr. (right) instructs NRCS Chief Lancaster on the release of the rehabilitated Osprey.



photo by Mark Musselman, Audubon SC



photo by Mark Musselman, Audubon SC

Above: SC NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas addressed the crowd that gathered to celebrate the WRP easement. **Left:** NRCS Videographer/Public Affairs Specialist Bob Stobaugh traveled from Florida to record the event.

National Headquarters Representative Visits SC to Explore Small Farmer Outreach

Ron Harris, Community and Rural Assistance Team Leader with the Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) and Rural Lands Division, Washington, DC, visited South Carolina recently to learn more about outreach to small farmers.

During his visit, Harris had an opportunity to meet with small and limited resource farmers who received assistance from NRCS through the financial and technical assistance available to them through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Santee-Wateree RC&D Coordinator Roy Todd assisted in coordinating site visits in an effort to allow Harris to speak one-on-one with small farmers.

Visiting with the farmers enabled Harris to compile valuable feedback, as well as suggestions for how NRCS can improve outreach efforts and continue to reach out to underserved customers. The information he gathered throughout the week allowed him to prepare a written report for headquarters staff. This information will be used to assist with efforts to expand outreach to small farmers on a national level.

NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas and Public Affairs Specialist and Outreach Coordinator Amy O. Maxwell accompanied Harris during his field visits. "I believe that SC has really been a pioneer when it comes to reaching out to small and limited resource farmers, and it is an honor to know that Mr. Harris wanted to spend some time with us, hear our suggestions, and also meet with the landowners that received our assistance. They provided him with some valuable input," remarked Maxwell.



left to right: Ron Harris, Community and Rural Assistance Team Leader with RC&D and Rural Lands Division in Washington, DC, talks with Manning County Small Farmer Hezekiah Gibson.

SC NRCS Highlights EQIP Incentives at Biodiesel Fuel Quality Symposium

SC NRCS was part of the program on September 19, 2007, at the SC Biodiesel Fuel Quality Symposium in Columbia. SC NRCS Soil Conservationist Bethel Durant prepared and presented a *PowerPoint* which highlighted financial incentives available through EQIP for use of biodiesel and ethanol. Nearly 150 people were in attendance. SC NRCS Environmental Engineer Stephen Henry also attended the symposium.



left to right: Clean Cities Program Manager and symposium coordinator Wendy Bell converses with SC NRCS' Durant and Henry in front of the NRCS outreach display.

SC Rapid Watershed Assessments Available Online

USC's Earth Sciences and Resources Institute (USC-ESRI) has developed and published 36 Rapid Watershed Assessment (RWA) profiles. This resource provides initial estimates of where conservation investments would best address the concerns of landowners, conservation districts, and other community organizations and stakeholders within a watershed.

These assessments help landowners and local leaders set priorities and determine the best actions to achieve their conservation goals.

Check it out at
www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/rapid_watershed_assessment.html

Holly Hill Flood Prevention Project Celebrated with Ribbon Cutting

Holly Hill residents are singing in the rain following the completion of a flood prevention project. The project was the result of a nearly 20-year partnership between federal, state & local entities to provide flood relief for residents in the southeastern Orangeburg County town.

The project, funded by USDA's Small Watershed Program, was designed by and installed under the supervision of the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas said the project consists of eight miles of channel work within and adjacent to the town of Holly Hill. "The project was initiated to correct problems affecting the 2,000+ residents in this area. Heavy rains caused flooding of homes, yards, roads and the downtown business district, in addition to public health and safety problems and inefficient operations of septic systems due to prolonged wetness."

Major sponsors included USDA-NRCS, Orangeburg County, Town of Holly Hill and the Orangeburg Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

A ribbon cutting ceremony was hosted on August 29, 2007, to celebrate the completion of the project.



Local, state, and county officials joined SC NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas (far right) in celebrating the completion of the Holly Hill Flood Prevention Project during an August ribbon cutting ceremony.

Integrating Trees, Forage, and Livestock: The Art of Successful Silvopasture

reprinted from: USDA Agroforestry Notes

Mixing livestock and pine trees is not a new concept in the South; in fact grazing cattle under pine trees dates back to the early 1800's. It was a very practical approach to utilizing land that farmers and ranchers considered to have low production potential.

Today the integration of livestock and trees is known as a silvopasture system. A silvopasture system is an intensive approach that brings together forest, livestock and forage management. Silvopasture results from the intentional establishment of forages into a stand of trees or when trees are planted on land dedicated to forage production.

Successful silvopasture management systems are integrated, intentional and intensive. When the objective is establishing forages into an even or uneven aged stand of trees, thinning may be necessary in order to provide adequate light and space for forage establishment, growth and management. If planting trees into an existing pasture is the selected plan, controlling the vegetation must be a consideration not only at planting, but may be necessary for 2 – 3 years following tree planting to ensure establishment.

Plowing and / or the use of herbicides are two common ways to control vegetation. Careful consideration must be given to the method selected to avoid damaging the trees and/or the desirable forage plants.



Grazing management is critical to the success of

the system. Initially livestock should not be allowed access to the silvopasture until the trees as well as the forages are well established. The trees must be allowed time to reach a height that would protect them from incidental trampling and browsing dam-

Well-managed silvopasture systems can provide a relatively constant income from livestock sales and selective sale of trees and timber.

age. Consideration must be given to forage species, fertility requirements, watering sources, and fencing. These factors are essential in providing the required amounts of forage that will meet the livestock's nutritional requirements in a timely manner.

Research has shown that by integrating trees, forage, and livestock a land management system can be created that produces marketable products while maintaining long-term productivity. Well-managed silvopasture systems can provide a relatively constant income from livestock sales and selective sale of trees and timber.

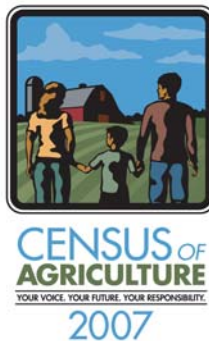
Attention Farmers: Make A Difference Through the 2007 Census of Agriculture

USDA will soon conduct the 2007 Census of Agriculture. The Census is only conducted once every 5 years, but it provides valuable information—information used by communities like yours as they plan for the future. The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is the agency conducting the Census.

They need farmers and ranchers to complete the Census as accurately and quickly as possible. The responses provide the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the Nation.

The 2007 Census of Agriculture will collect information concerning all areas of farming and ranching operations, including production expenses, market value of products, and operator characteristics. Responses help provide information that is used for all types of agricultural planning and decision-making. This information helps USDA work with other organizations to develop short-term and long-term improvements, strategies, and safeguards.

For more information about the Census of Agriculture, or if you are involved in agriculture and do not receive a report form by January 10, 2008, please call toll-free: (888) 424-7828 or visit online at: www.agcensus.usda.gov



SC Soil Scientists Begin MLRA Approach for Updating Soil Surveys

by Charlie Ogg, Soil Survey Party Leader

South Carolina is on board as the Soil Survey Division of NRCS strikes out in a new direction for updating soil surveys. In the year 1894, the federal government formally recognized the value of soils to mankind by establishing the Division of Agricultural Soils in the USDA's Weather Bureau. Since its inception the soil survey program has incorporated new knowledge and concepts, techniques, and technology toward improving soil survey information and production. Today, with increasing demands on the soil resource for both agricultural and non-agricultural uses, it is imperative that soil surveys provide new information to users as quickly as possible.

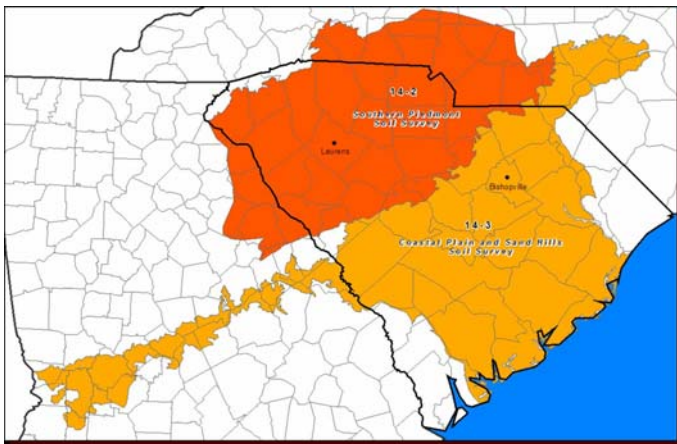
Soils occur in association with major geologic bodies across broad geographic areas referred to as Major Land Resource Areas (MLRAs). The new approach for updating surveys dissolves state and county political boundaries. Rather than completing soil surveys county-by-county, soil scientists will update soil map units regionally both within their home state and across state lines. Old county-by-county soil surveys have different publication dates so they reflect varying degrees of knowledge about the soils. The intent of the MLRA endeavor is to investigate common soil map units across the entire geographic area at one time and provide consistent, current, and relevant data for users. That is to say, for example, wherever Norfolk Series is mapped on 0 to 2 percent slopes in the Coastal Plain, data will be collected for several soil properties to make sure the primary soil mapped is actually Norfolk, as well as to determine other soils (inclusions) occurring in the map unit. Few if any soil line changes are expected to be made to the soil maps. Symbology may change as the map unit composition is revised. Soil maps and the National Soil Information System (NASIS) database will be revised after completing field work for each map unit. Landowners and other clients will have access to the latest maps and data via the Web Soil Survey and Soil Data Mart.

One objective of the restructuring is to improve management efficiency by reducing soil survey offices from 280 nationwide to about 150

offices. South Carolina is home to two of these new offices, serving portions of South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia.

The two offices officially opened for business October 1, 2007. Lance Brewington is the MLRA Project Leader for Office 14-2, Southern Piedmont Soil Survey. This office is based in Laurens and has responsibility for 9.6 million acres. Charlie Ogg is the MLRA Project Leader for Office 14-3, Coastal Plain and Sand Hills. This office is based in Bishopville and has responsibility for 11.7 million acres. Myra Jones (Laurens), Caleb Gulley, and Jackie Reed (both in Bishopville) are soil scientists assisting with the effort.

The MLRA Soil Survey offices are equipped to collect data on soil properties that in the past were estimated from guide sheets. Investigative sampling projects are also planned involving Soil Survey Staff researchers from Lincoln, NE. All data collected will enable us to fine tune our understanding of soils across the Piedmont and Coastal Plain, and ultimately, produce better products for the customers. From time to time while out mapping, a farmer asks why new soil maps are necessary when old maps are available. The answer to that question may lie in a quote I recently read; *....science is not designed to produce absolute knowledge, eternally true once found, for the most part it simply pushes back the frontier of that vast realm called ignorance.*



SC Association of RC&D Councils Sponsoring Logo Contest

The SC Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils (SCARCDC's) is sponsoring a contest to reinvent its public persona. They are looking for a catchy new logo, tagline, informational brochure and webpage design .

All submissions become the property of the SCARCDC's. The winner will receive a \$250 prize. For more information, visit: <http://scarlinarcd.tripod.com/index.html>.

Where do I submit my entry and when is it due?

All entries must be received by December 18, 2007. You can email your entry by visiting the website mentioned above, or mail your entry to: Pee Dee RC&D, 300 Russell Street, Room 209, Darlington, SC 29532.

Need to know more about the SCARCDC's in order to develop the materials?

The SC Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils is comprised of the 7 Resource Conservation & Development Councils operating within the state of SC. The Association serves as an advocate for local SC councils, and as a pipeline for completing projects on a state-wide scale. RC&D's are 501-3(c) nonprofit organizations that have been authorized by the US Secretary of Agriculture. RC&D Councils complete projects in the areas of land conservation, water management, community development and land management. Specific information about RC&D's can be found at www.rcdnet.org and www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/rcd.

Information that deals with SC's 7 RC&D's can be found at http://www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/rcd_offices.html.

Please visit the 3 websites above to gather information about the SCARCDC.

If you have additional questions, contact Lynette Savereno, Pee Dee RC&D Coordinator, at (843) 393-9809, ext. 102 or lynette.savereno@sc.usda.gov.



SCNRCS had another great year of volunteer conservation efforts around the state, with Earth Team Volunteers working in 35 field offices. Many thanks to the NRCS field staffers who recruited, trained, and motivated Earth Team volunteers, and most of all, thanks to the volunteers for donating your time, passion, and energy to helping us conserve soil and water resources. Your efforts are appreciated and truly make a difference.

Earth Team Volunteer Status Report for SC FY '07

**Total SC Earth Team Volunteer
Hours Donated**
5,633

Individuals with the Most Volunteer Hours

- ◆ Sharon Workman, Chesterfield Field Office= 306 hrs
- ◆ Henry King, Clarendon Field Office= 210 hrs
- ◆ Harold McJenkins, Pickens SWCD= 117 hrs

Field Offices with the Most Group Volunteer Hours

- ◆ Kershaw Conservation Group= 431 hrs
- ◆ Bamberg SWCD= 328 hrs
- ◆ Foothills RC&D Council= 253 hrs

More Earth Team News...

New Volunteer Application

The National Earth Team Coordinator and Liaison worked with the Federal Interagency Team on a new application form. The new form will eliminate the Earth Team Individual and Group Application forms and will eliminate the need for collecting Social Security Numbers. The new form is at OMB for approval and we hope to begin using it shortly.

Volunteers to Assist with New Tracking System

The National Office continues to work with the developer of Volunteer.Gov/Gov Keith Stewart, on a new volunteer tracking system. Once there is a contract in place, a committee will be established to assist in setting guidelines for the new system. Data from the current volunteer database will be moved into the new system with the exception of the social security numbers.

Earth Team Student Brochure

A recruitment brochure targeting high school and college students is now available through LANDCARE at-- <http://landcare.sc.egov.usda.gov/product.asp?ID=730>



Future NRCS Employees?

They would make great Earth Team Volunteers!
Kathy Hodges (far right), Soil Conservation Tech. in the Spartanburg Field Office, spoke with students at a career fair and told them why she loves working for NRCS.



News from Our Partners



Governor Sanford Encourages Voluntary Water Conservation

As the severe drought continues, Palmetto State residents are encouraged to conserve water. Drought conditions have continued to deteriorate with significant impacts to most of the streams, lakes, and groundwater.

According to the SC Department of Natural Resources Hydrology Office, 14 of the 17 monitored streams are now at the extreme drought level. Some lakes have declined to levels lower than during the 1998-2002 drought. Over most of the state, rainfall during all months this year except June has been below normal, according to SCDNR State Climatology Office. The deficit is as much as 17 inches in some locations, while many areas experienced the driest ever July to September.

Governor Mark Sanford is encouraging all South Carolinians to conserve water during the drought. "As this situation continues, we believe it's incredibly important for all South Carolinians to take individual responsibility for what they can do to conserve water."

SCDNR State Climatologist Hope Mizzell says, "We need many months of normal to above normal rainfall, and unfortunately that is not expected. National forecasters are predicting a drier than normal fall and winter due to the developing La Nina."

With little relief on the horizon, Mizzell urges South Carolinians to begin voluntary conservation measures now. "All water users from the local water systems to the individual homeowner are encouraged to voluntarily conserve water. If we all work together now, we can hopefully avoid more stringent restrictions if the drought does continue."

For more information about drought, visit the Office of Climatology or contact State Climatologist Hope Mizzell at (803) 734-9568.

Berkeley SWCD and SCDNR Host Successful Carolina Coastal Adventure

Over seventy South Carolina high school ninth and tenth graders enjoyed the seventh annual Carolina Coastal Adventure environmental education camp October 12-14th. Students from all over the state, representing over twenty-six counties, attended. Sponsorship occurred through the support of South Carolina's Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Districts selected and sponsored rising 9th and 10th graders who indicated an interest in natural resources.

The educational event, developed and supported by the Berkeley Soil and Water Conservation District and run by SC D N R Conservation District staff, focused on water quality and quantity issues in the Santee watershed.

Santee Cooper hosted the event at their Wampee Conference Center and campground. Other event sponsors included Berkeley County Water and Sanitation Authority, Berkeley Electric Cooperative, Home Telephone Company, Nucor, Old Santee Canal State Park, Sanders Brothers Construction, South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts, and Charleston Soil and Water Conservation District.

The program gave students a unique, hands-on opportunity to learn about coastal water resources, watershed dynamics, and conservation. Students explored a variety of ecosystems around the Lowcountry, starting at Lake Moultrie and moving downstream to the



Over seventy South Carolina high school ninth and tenth graders enjoyed the seventh annual Carolina Coastal Adventure environmental education camp October 12-14th.

Carolina Coastal Adventure continued...

Charleston Harbor. Field trips this year included a blackwater swamp, an estuary, nature and wildlife exhibits, a hydroelectric plant, a salt marsh, and Folly Beach.

Students participated in nature and beach walks, canoeing, seining, and Gullah singing around the bonfire. Rachel Silverman, a 10th grader from Kershaw County said "We had a great time, learned a lot, and made some great friends."

Although students appreciated and benefited from the nature-packed schedule, many students who attended couldn't help but mention the food. DNR's Jonathan Williams famous barbeque chicken was definitely a highlight of the event!

Get Ready for the 2008 SC Conservation Partnership Conference, January 16-18th!

The planning committee has been hard at work preparing another great SC Conservation Partnership Conference.

This year's theme--**South Carolina at the Crossroads: The Future of Our Water**-- will focus on water quantity and quality, and will feature local, regional, and national experts. The keynote speaker is Tom Lester, *a.k.a. Eb*, from the *Green Acres* television show. On Thursday, January 17th, awards will be presented in the afternoon followed by an awards reception.

Early bird registration is due by **December 31, 2007**, and is **\$190** which includes all conference functions (3 meals, breaks, meetings/materials, etc.). Hotel reservations must be made no later than December 17th at the Kingston Plantation in order to receive the special conference rate of \$95/night.

On January 15, 2008, the SC Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) will host a symposium entitled, *Smart Farming: The Basics of Precision Agriculture*, also at the Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach. More information will be forthcoming. Make plans to attend these two informative meetings!



Welcome to SC NRCS!



**Brandon
DuRant**

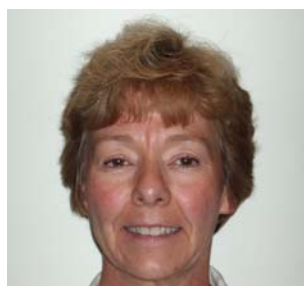
Brandon DuRant is the new Soil Conservationist for Chesterfield County. He recently graduated from Clemson University with a degree in Environmental and Natural Resources-Conservation Biology. In his spare time he enjoys hunting, fishing, and working on the farm. He looks forward to working with NRCS. Welcome Brandon!

Ben Padget was born and raised in Lexington, SC. His parents are Rick and Barbara Padget, who still reside in Lexington. He is the middle of three children.

He graduated from Gilbert High School in 2003 and attended Clemson University the following fall. As a child (and still!) he loved the outdoors, especially hunting and fishing. His passion and love for the outdoors led him to study Wildlife and Fisheries Biology at Clemson, where he graduated in May of 2007. In his spare time, you can find him fishing anywhere from Pawley's Island to Lake Murray, hunting, or pulling for the Clemson Tiger's this fall. He has already met and worked with some great people within the agency, and looks forward to working with them in the future. Welcome Ben!



Ben Padget



Karen Brady

Oklahoma State University, Northwest.

Karen started her career in the early 80's as a soil scientist in Oklahoma. After about 5 years, she accepted a job as a Range Conservationist, also in Oklahoma, then transferred as a Range Conservationist to Broadus, Montana, and continued in Montana until October 2000. During her tenure in Montana, she also worked as a District Conservationist for 11 years.

She then transferred to Pennsylvania in the Fall of 2000 to accept a position as RC&D Coordinator. In 2005, she resigned to teach *Soils 101* at Penn State University and then taught high school during the two years before accepting her current position as RC&D Coordinator in Aiken for the Edisto-Savannah RC&D Area. Welcome Karen!

Karen Brady is originally from Denver, Colorado. She graduated from Colorado State University with a B.Sc. in Range Ecology, Disturbed Lands Concentration. She also has a M.A. in Education from Okla-

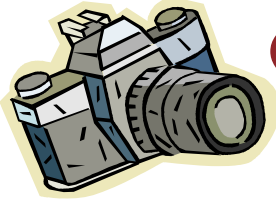


Randy Fowler

Randy Fowler returns to NRCS as the Resource Soil Scientist for the Low Country Service Area.

For the past seven years, Randy worked with the US Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District in the Wetlands Regulatory Program. He served in the Special Projects Branch as the nationwide permit coordinator, hydric soils specialist, and was responsible for consistency in jurisdictional determinations.

In his previous SC NRCS employment, Randy served as a Soil Scientist in the Orangeburg, Dorchester, Allendale, and Charleston Soil Survey Offices. Welcome back Randy!



Conservation Photo Contest Winners

First Place

*Photo Collage by USDA-Rural Development
State Director Tee Miller*



Photos taken at South Island, Georgetown,
South Carolina, February 2007.

**Conservation Photo
Contest Winners cont...**



JJ Goat, by Lynette Savereno, Pee Dee RC&D Coordinator
Below: Additional photos by Savereno



**Conservation Photo
Contest Winners cont...**

right:

Barn Swallows, by Ann Bentley, Charleston
Soil Conservation Technician



below:

Woodstorks in Edgefield, by Matt Barrington,
Edgefield Soil Conservationist



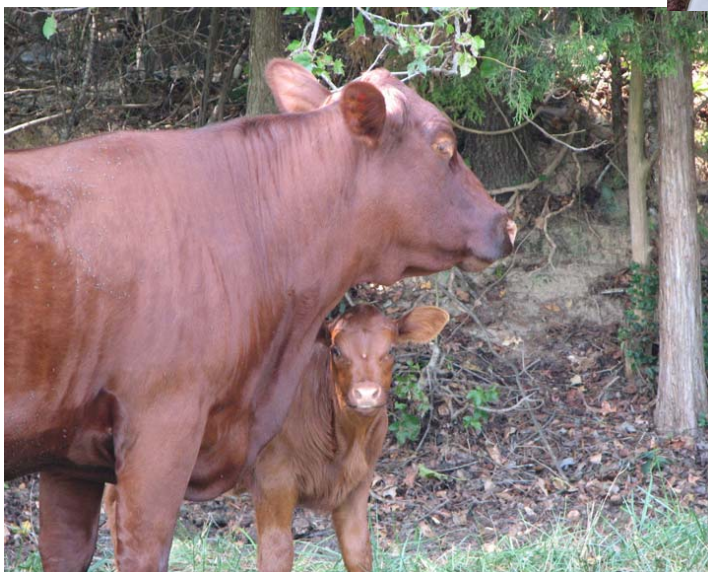
below:

Irrigating Strawberries, by Kathy Hodges,
Spartanburg Soil Conservation Tech.



left:

Cows, by Emory Holsonback,
Resource Soil Scientist



PERSONNEL UPDATE

NEW EMPLOYEES

-Karen Brady was selected as Edisto-Savannah RC&D Coordinator, GS-0401-12, effective August 5, 2007.

-John R. Colson was selected as a Civil Engineering Technician, GS-0802-08, in the Walterboro Field Office, effective October 28, 2007.

-Brandon Durant was selected as a Soil Conservationist Career Intern, GS-0457-05, in the Chesterfield Field Office, effective August 5, 2007.

-Randall K. Fowler was selected as the Resource Soil Scientist, GS-0470-12, in the Walterboro Field Office, effective September 2, 2007.

-Staci N. Henry was selected as the District Conservationist, GS-0457-11, in the Newberry Field Office, effective October 28, 2007.

-Benjamin R. Padgett was selected as a Soil Conservationist Career Intern, GS-0457-05, in the St. George Field Office, effective August 5, 2007.

-Beverly A. Alexander was selected as a Veteran's Administration (VA) trainee to provide temporary administrative assistance to the Programs, Human Resources, and Public Affairs staffs in the State Office.

PROMOTIONS

-Lance Brewington was promoted to MLRA Soil Survey Project Leader, GS-0470-12, in the Laurens Field Office, effective July 22, 2007.

-Ann Christie was promoted to the Supervisory District Conservationist in the Catawba Watershed area, GS-0457-12, effective October 14, 2007. Her duty station will remain Lancaster.

-Kim Williams – McDowell was promoted to Human Resource Assistant, GS-203-07, in the State Office, effective June 10, 2007.

-Odessa Sirman was promoted to Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, in the Hampton Field Office, effective September 2, 2007.

-Hugh Smith was promoted to the Supervisory District Conservationist in the Saluda Watershed area, GS-0457-12, effective October 14, 2007. His duty station will remain Saluda.

TRANSFERS

Tina Jerome, District Conservationist in the Calhoun/St. Matthews FO, was reassigned as a DC, GS-0457-11, with Virginia NRCS.

REASSIGNMENTS

-Louis Jackson, Sumter District Conservationist, has been selected for the Supervisory District Conservationist in the Wateree Watershed area, effective October 14, 2007. His duty station will remain Sumter.

-Diane Leone, Hampton/Allendale District Conservationist, has been selected for the Supervisory District Conservationist in the Salkehatchie Watershed area. Her duty station will be Ridgeland. Effective October 14, 2007.

RESIGNATIONS

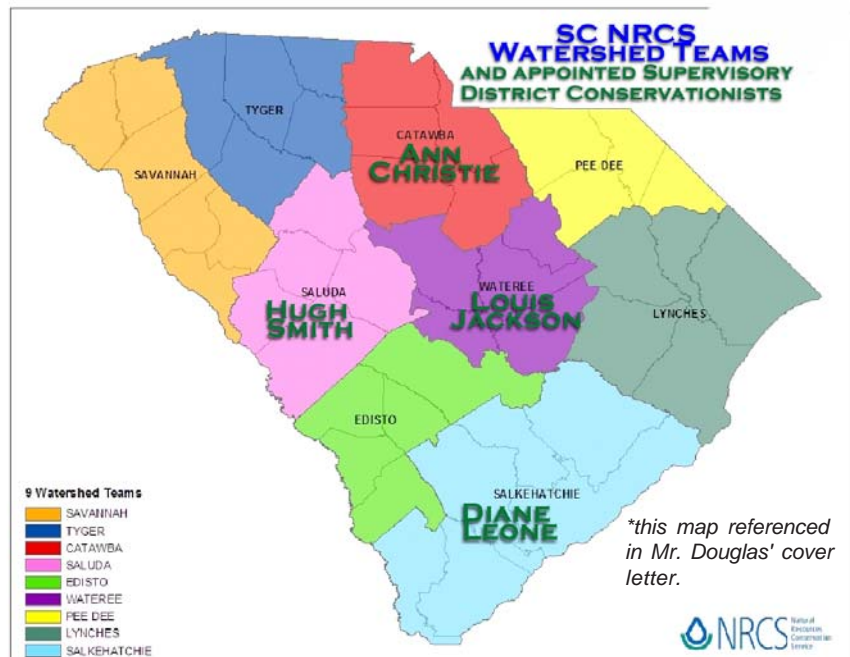
-Mae W. Hazel, Administrative Assistant in the State Office, resigned effective September 29, 2007.

-Corey B. Smith, Soil Conservation Technician in the St. Matthews Field Office, resigned effective July 7, 2007.

-Beth M. Truesdale, Soil Conservationist for the Abbeville/McCormick Field Office, resigned effective July 6, 2007.

RETIREMENTS

Alex Johnson, Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-12, in the Marion Field Office, retired effective August 4, 2007.



Turkey and Cuffeytown Creek Water Quality Enhancement *Ninety-Six RC&D/NRCS Partner with Nature Conservancy*

The Ninety-Six RC&D Council worked with The Nature Conservancy, NRCS, and local SWCD's to enhance water quality in the Turkey and Cuffeytown Creek Watersheds (covering Edgefield, Greenwood, and McCormick Counties). The project was made possible through funding obtained via the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)'s Private Stewardship Grants. The grants are for conservation projects on private lands where en-

dangered, threatened, and other at-risk species are identified. The Southeast Region received more than \$1.1 million in assistance, with \$65,000 granted to the South Carolina project. Ninety-

Six RC&D Coordinator Elyse Benson said, "Turkey and Cuffeytown Creeks contain three of the seven remaining populations of the federally endangered Carolina heelsplitter." These watersheds were designated as critical habitat for the heelsplitter by the USFWS. One of the identified factors affecting heelsplitter habitat included farming and forestry practices, including unpaved roads and lack of best management practices. Benson said, "This project targeted reduction of sediment, nutrients, and chemical runoff from agriculture and forestry operations."

Two sites were improved with the USFWS grant funds, including Watson Dorn's Hickory Hill Farms (a dairy operation in Edgefield), and a privately owned timber plantation that is also used as a hunt club. "The work completed at these sites will protect water quality in these two watersheds, and also help protect the habitat of the Carolina heelsplitter," said Edgefield NRCS Soil Conservationist Matt Barrington. At the Dorn farm, the feed mix area was reinforced with geotextile materials to replace the gravel. "Before, it was really difficult



The Carolina heelsplitter is a federally endangered species, and USFWS grant funds are being used to protect water quality in the 3-county area where critical habitat for this fragile species was identified.

to clean this area, and excess nutrients from the feed would eventually end up running off into nearby water bodies, polluting the water," explained Barrington. Dorn, a fifth-generation farmer, feels great about being able to protect the natural resources that have supported his business for so many years. "Before these grant funds made it possible for me to protect this area, it was a soggy mess. But now, it is much easier for me to clean, and I like knowing that I'm also protecting water quality."



At the hunt club, heavy use areas at creek crossings and along main roads were stabilized, and structures were installed to prevent gully erosion and reduce slope length.



Edgefield dairy farmer Watson Dorn utilized grant funds to reinforce his heavy use/feed area with geotextile materials, thus making it easier to clean, and preventing runoff (excess nutrients) from polluting surrounding water bodies.

NRCS Employee Finally Gets Credit Where Credit is Due :)



Late Breaking NRCS News! NC/SC Agricultural Economist Curt Hobbs was recently recognized for his talents. During the *Basics of Conservation Planning* course in Creedmoor, NC, the students presented him with a great honor. Hobbs was bestowed with a "Most Likely to

Become Chairman of the Fed, But Get Fired for Speaking His Mind, paper plate award.

Congratulations Curt, we are proud of you!